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E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/12/03

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SUBJECT: Canada working "behind the scenes" on democratic reform in Burma

REF: STATE 121789

CLASSIFIED BY: Scott Bellard, Minister Counselor for Political Affairs, State, POL; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (C/NF) Canada is working "behind the scenes" on new ideas for advancing democratic reform in Burma and welcomes U.S. high level engagement with the Burmese government (reftel), according to Erin Koenig, deskoff for Burma, Thailand, and Regional Human Rights in the Southeast Asia and Oceania Relations Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). Koenig commented that USG efforts are "consistent" with Canada's goals for "national reconciliation and dialogue between the national opposition and the junta." She added that DFAIT would consider a public statement from Canada echoing a call for political reform.

¶2. (C/NF) Koenig insisted that Burma was "one of the most important items on the agenda" internally at DFAIT and that "like the EU," Canada is "looking within at our own policy to build new approaches to Burma for reform with the 2010 elections." As part of DFAIT's internal review, Koenig requested any additional information on A/S Campbell's trip to Burma. Koenig confirmed to poloff that Canada had also held "numerous" bilateral meetings on the margins of the recent APEC Leaders' Summit, at which political reform in Burma was "high on the agenda" and "emphasized in the talking points" with ASEAN partners.

¶3. (U) Koenig and Southeast Asia and Oceania Relations Division Director Nadia Burger plan to travel to Washington in December to meet with State Department interlocutors on U.S. Burma policy, but have not yet set their exact travel dates.

JACOBSON